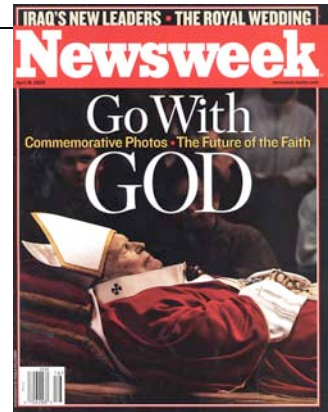


Newsweek

New York, NY
 April 18, 2005
 Circulation: 3,145,362

Periscope



GAY WEDDINGS

The Ring's The Thing

UDI BEHR DOESN'T take no for an answer. So when the Israeli jewelry designer decided to make wedding and commitment rings for same-sex couples, he was undeterred when several manufacturers and retailers turned him down. Behr, who has sold his work at stores from Saks Fifth Avenue to Sam's Club, and designed baubles worn by Britney Spears and Ludacris, didn't understand why companies weren't interested. Some were vague; others admitted they were afraid of alienating straight customers. But, he says, "the more you say no to me, the more you fuel me."

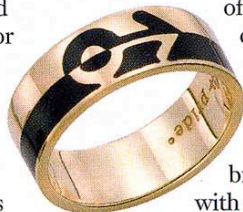
After about eight months of rejection, Behr gave up on the conventional route. He put together a creative team and rounded up \$2.5 million from investors to make the rings and sell them online, directly to the gay

community he'd intended them for. Last week Behr launched the site, loveandpride.com, with collections of engagement and wedding or commitment rings, from \$500 to \$5,000. Some are flashy—gold and silver ring sets stamped with interlocking male or female insignias—while others, such as the "Love and Honor" set,

offer more-traditional diamond rings, the bands decorated with upside-down triangles. The site also offers necklaces, bracelets and watches with similar themes.

Behr dreamed up the idea of the rings while watching San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom espouse gay marriage on television. Behr got off the couch and started sketching designs.

"It was a very simple reaction for me," he says. "I'm in an industry that's very conservative—nobody's doing anything for the gay community." He hopes the site, which features a section of gay and lesbian couples' how-we-met love stories, will also educate people about same-sex marriage. He's donating 10 percent of the Love and Pride collection's profits to Marriage Equality, a gay-advocacy group.



—SARAH CHILDRESS